

THE 12TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT REPORT



Speaker pro Tempore
Leland Y. Yee
12th Assembly District



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PROUDLY REPRESENTING SAN FRANCISCO AND SAN MATEO COUNTIES

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BIPARTISAN VOTE SECURES PRESCRIPTION DRUGS FOR SENIORS



**LEGISLATURE AND GOVERNOR COME TOGETHER
TO ASSIST SENIORS AND DISABLED RECEIVE
MEDICATIONS DURING COVERAGE CHANGES**

The California State Assembly recently approved legislation to allocate \$150 million to cover prescription drug costs for low-income and elderly Californians who have improperly been denied coverage under the federal government's new Medicare Part D drug program.

This comes after the January 1 deadline where more than one million California seniors and disabled citizens, whose prescription drugs were previously paid by Medi-Cal, had their drug coverage transferred to Medicare. Problems with the new

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CALIFORNIA LYME DISEASE ASSOCIATION HONORS ASSEMBLYMAN YEE AS “LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR”

**220,000 AMERICANS DEVELOP LYME EACH YEAR, MAKING
IT THE MOST PREVALENT VECTOR-BORNE DISEASE**

Since 2002 when Speaker pro Tem Yee was first elected to the California State Assembly, he has been a steadfast advocate for the prevention of Lyme disease and those currently suffering from the epidemic. As a result, the California Lyme Disease Association (CALDA) recently honored Speaker pro Tem Yee with their first-ever “Legislator of the Year”.

“For several years Dr. Yee has been a strong champion for the Lyme disease patient community,” said CALDA President Phyllis Mervine. “Lyme disease is a hidden epidemic in California and many people are suffering because of it. Many people can't find doctors to treat them and requests for insurance coverage are routinely denied. We can't thank Dr. Yee enough for his leadership and support.”

“I am honored to receive this recognition from the Lyme Disease Association, a group devoted to the proper diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease,” said Yee. “Together we have passed meaningful legislation to protect Californians from Lyme disease and the serious health problems that this epidemic causes.”

In 2005, Yee's Assembly Bill (AB) 592 was signed into law which protects physicians who treat persistent long term Lyme disease from possible loss of license or censure by the California State Medical Board. Prior to this law, medical practitioners proficient in the treatment of long term Lyme disease were subject of recrimination and loss of license by complaints filled with the Medical Board by other physicians not as proficient in the treatment of the disease and who do not believe Lyme can be an illness requiring multiple years of treatment..

This year Yee introduced AB 1226, which will reform the Lyme Disease Advisory Committee by requiring open meetings, greater expertise of committee members, establishment of a proper reporting system for Lyme Disease in

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program have left many of these beneficiaries with significant out-of-pocket costs, or in some cases, unable to even obtain their prescription medications.

"In California alone, over 200,000 people have been unable to get their medicine without lengthy delays or being forced to pay exorbitant co-payments," said Yee. "As a result of a flawed federal drug plan, our seniors have had to make the choice between buying their medications and putting food on the table."

"Fortunately, we were able to come together in a bipartisan fashion to guarantee our seniors the prescription drugs they need," said Yee. "It is imperative that the federal government immediately reimburse the State for correcting their errors."

Specifically, AB 132 requires the state Department of Health Services (DHS) to provide drug benefits to people enrolled in Medicare, who are also enrolled in Medi-Cal and receiving prescription drug benefits, and who are not able to obtain drug benefits from their prescription drug plan under the Medicare program. The bill appropriates \$150 million from the General Fund to provide drug benefits for up to one month.

"While the Federal government gets its act together, we will make sure that the most vulnerable low-income Californians – the elderly and the disabled – can get the medications that keep them alive," said Speaker Fabian Núñez. "In the meantime, the Republicans who control all branches of our Federal government in Washington D.C. need to reimburse the 20 states that are taking action on this issue."



COMMITTEE APPROVES YEE'S BILL TO ASSIST DISABLED VETERANS

***BILL WOULD ESTABLISH A 10% BID PREFERENCE IN STATE
CONTRACTS FOR DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESSES***

The State Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs recently approved AB 410, legislation authored by Speaker pro Tem Yee, which would establish a ten percent bid preference on state contracts for businesses owned by disabled veterans, also known as Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBES).

"According to yearly reports compiled by the Department of General Services, disabled veteran owned businesses generally receive less than three percent of state contracts despite specific goals to reach that number," said Yee. "Bid preferences afforded to small businesses have proven effective in increasing their ability to fairly compete for state contracts; disabled veterans deserve that same opportunity."

"With the ever increasing number of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans to California, this is one way our state can show appreciation to disabled veterans," said Sheryl Shaffer, Chairwoman of the Veterans Employment Committee of San Mateo County. "Many veterans are finding it harder and harder to obtain decent paying jobs and thus decide to go into business to support their families. This bill provides them that opportunity."

There are currently fewer than 500 certified DVBES in the state of California. Such businesses include building contracting, computers and technology, printing services, custodial services, refrigeration and supplies, and apparel supplies, among others.



YEE CONTINUES PERFECT RECORD ON KEY LEGISLATIVE SCORECARDS



NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

Speaker pro Tem Yee earned the top score of 100% on the legislative report card issued by California National Organization for Women (NOW). The NOW report card scored legislators on 20 key bills ranging from pay equity and minimum wage to marriage equality and prescription drugs.

"Speaker pro Tem Yee has authored and advocated for key legislation in support of women" said Jodi Hicks, Legislative Director for NOW. "California women can count on Leland Yee to fight for justice and equality, and be a strong voice in support of our efforts."



CALPIRG CONSUMER PROTECTION

The author of numerous pieces of consumer protection legislation, Speaker pro Tem Yee earned the top score of 100 percent on the legislative report card issued by California's consumer advocacy organization CALPIRG. Disappointingly, the average score in the State Senate was only 64 percent and 62 percent in the Assembly.

"We applaud Speaker pro Tem Yee for being a consumer champion," said Steve Blackledge, legislative director for CALPIRG. "He put the interests of consumers over special interests, whether the issue was safe medicine or stopping auto loan rip-offs, and his constituents need to know that they were well represented on consumer issues in 2005."

Yee has introduced several consumer protection bills in 2006 including legislation to protect patients from surprise medical bills (AB 1321); to establish minimum safety standards for nail salons (AB 413); to prevent the use of children as medical interpreters (AB 775); to help car owners avoid costly repairs when their vehicle has been in an accident (AB 1852); and to curb the sale of stolen merchandise online (AB 1178).



COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

Speaker pro Tem Yee earned the top score of 100% on the legislative report card issued by the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA). The report card analyzed votes on a variety of bills ranging from the establishment of the nation's toughest human trafficking laws to creating a state Sex Offender Management Board.

"I am proud to fight for the rights of sexual assault victims and finding new ways to protect our community from sexual predators," said Yee. "Over 100,000 registered sex offenders live in California; legislative efforts are necessary to make sure our children and families are kept safe from these individuals."



STATE ASSEMBLY APPROVES YEE'S SCHOOL NUTRITION BILL

STATE CONTINUES COMMITMENT TO BETTER SCHOOL NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS

Last year, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law sweeping changes to the State's school nutritional standards. This year, the Legislature seems poised to send the Governor legislation to bring about additional changes to the list of foods available to California's school kids. One such measure, AB 469 authored by Speaker pro Tem Yee, was recently approved in the State Assembly on a bipartisan 65-7 vote.

Specifically, AB 469 will update state guidelines for school nutritional standards to include "sugar and sodium" in the list of foods classified as sources of unhealthy calories.

"By recognizing sugar and sodium as ingredients to be limited, we will curtail the number of unhealthy foods available to students," said Yee. "A recent study estimated that the cost of obesity, in terms of health expenses and lost productivity, to be over \$28 billion dollars per year. Clearly, we need to start addressing this problem early on and in our schools."

The bill stipulates that where comparable food products of equal nutritional value are available, that the food which is lower in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sugar, or sodium shall be used.

Obesity presents numerous health problems for a child, including increased likelihood for pediatric hypertension, type II diabetes mellitus, and coronary heart disease, as well as stress on weight-bearing joints and lower self-esteem.

"Obesity among children and adolescents has been nationally recognized as a growing epidemic, whose long term effects are just being realized," said Yee. "It is imperative that children be exposed to healthy and nutritional foods to curb the obesity problem and to establish healthy eating habits."

AB 469 is supported by the California School Nutrition Association, California Teachers Association (CTA), California Dental Association, California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, and California Optometric Association. The bill now heads to the State Senate before consideration by the Governor.

AB 469 now heads to the State Senate before consideration by the Governor.



**CLICK HERE TO WATCH LELAND YEE'S RESPONSE
TO THE STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS**

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California, as well as provide the Occupations Health Safety Board with the risk factors of Lyme Disease for state employees, such as park rangers and firefighters, who are most susceptible to Lyme.

Lyme disease is an infection caused by a spirochete (spiral-shaped bacterium) that is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected Ixodes tick. It is called "The Great Imitator" because its symptoms mimic many other diseases. About 220,000 Americans develop Lyme each year, making it the most prevalent vector-borne disease in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), only 10% of cases are even reported.

When Lyme is diagnosed and treated properly and promptly, most people recover quickly. Untreated, or inadequately treated, Lyme disease can cause serious life-long health problems, sometimes leading to permanent disability. People with persistent Lyme disease often experience unrelenting, debilitating fatigue, cognitive problems, neurological damage, arthritis, heart damage, vision or hearing deficits, or psychiatric problems.

To avoid exposure to Lyme disease always check for ticks. Avoiding exposure to ticks when possible and, if you are bitten, promptly removing the tick are the primary preventive measures. If you walk in tall grass or brush, wear long sleeves and tuck the bottoms of long pants into your socks. Use a permethrin spray, or one recommended for use with ticks. Ticks are often found on thigh, groin, underarms, backs of knees, behind the ears and on the neck at the hairline. Be sure to check children and pets. If you find a tick, bring it to a doctor's office to be tested.

For more information on Lyme disease visit www.lymedisease.org. ❖

COME JOIN ASSEMBLYMEMBER YEE AT THE Annual 12th Assembly District COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

9:00 A.M., SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 2006
ARMENIAN AMERICAN DAY SCHOOL
825 BROTHERHOOD WAY
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
Please RSVP: 415-557-2312

JOIN THE WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN!

STATEWIDE EFFORT OF MEN SPEAKING OUT AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



**CLICK HERE TO SIGN THE PLEDGE AND HELP
PUT AN END TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

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January 4, 2006

HALF MOON BAY REVIEW

AND PESCADERO PEBBLE

SERVING THE ENTIRE SAN MATEO COASTLINE SINCE 1896

Wednesday

New Year brings new laws

BY STEFANIE HOFFMAN

Along with champagne, confetti and a kiss or two, the New Year also rings in a host of new laws.

This year Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signed more than 700 bills into law, most of which went into effect Jan. 1. They deal with a variety of issues ranging from drunk-driving penalties to offshore drilling to child protection and to automobile insurance for low-income families.

Californians will see numerous bills addressing bilingual and multilingual families, one of which attempts to ensure better communication in the healthcare profession.

Sponsored by Assemblyman Leland

Yee, D-San Francisco, Assembly Bill 800 requires that a patients' principal spoken



Yee

language be included on his or her medical records.

Adam Keigwin, spokesman for Yee, said the bill addresses communication problems that arise when medical personnel are unaware that English is not their patient's primary language.

"If their primary language is not English, there could be some things that are being lost," said Keigwin.

Keigwin said that this piece of legislation sets the stage for another bill currently working its way through the Senate, which would require all medical facilities that receive state funding to provide translation services for non English-speaking patients and prohibit children under 15 from being used as translators for their parents.

Children, as well as adults with a sweet tooth, will be further protected by SB 719, which requires state health officials to test candy for lead levels and prohibits sales of candy that exceeds specified lead standards.

Other laws aimed to protect children, however, are still facing legal hang-ups.



Scott

One bill that would have prohibited the sale of violent video games to children is currently

at a standstill after facing legal challenges by the video game industry. A federal court date is scheduled for later this month.

"The medical data clearly indicates that these ultra-violent video games have harmful effects on kids, and thus I fully expect us to prevail in this case," said Yee, the bill's author, in a written statement.

New legislation for 2006 also imposes stiffer penalties for drunk drivers.

State Sen. Jack Scott, D-Altadena, sponsored Senate Bill 207, which dictates that anyone convicted of driving under the influence within the past 10 years and either refuses to complete a blood test or has a blood-alcohol level of .1 percent or more will have his or her vehicle impounded.

Training programs for first-time DUI offenders will also be lengthened starting in January because of AB 1353. Drivers with .2 percent or greater blood alcohol level will be required to take nine months of classes totaling at least 60 hours, increased from six months of classes with a minimum 45 hours for first time offenders.

In addition to cracking down on drunk drivers, law enforcement will now be able to help protect the environment.

Thanks to AB 716, law enforcement officials will be able to more easily remove abandoned vessels from waterways.

The law was sponsored by the Recreational Boaters of California with the aim of reducing risks to boaters from abandoned vessels. Potential problems have included obstructed waterways and leaking oil, gas and other hazardous materials.

The new law also reduces the amount of time law enforcement can hold the abandoned vessel before selling it at auction from 90 to 60 days and doubles the maximum fine for vessel abandonment to \$3,000. Those in violation will also have to repay

the agency for the cost of removing and disposing a vessel.

June Iljana, spokeswoman for the California Department of Boating and Waterways, said that this piece of legislation is an important step for the environment and boating safety in general.

"Often in these abandoned vessels, substances leak out and that pollutes the waterways," said Iljana. "Just having them there is a problem for public safety whether they float or sink."

While the governor vetoed legislation that would have legalized gay marriage, domestic partners will have more rights as a result of SB 973.

Among other things, the bill modifies the California Employee Retirement System so state employees can give their pensions to their domestic partners in the case of their death without facing significantly higher costs than state employees with spouses.

And perhaps one of the most unusual laws going into effect for the New Year is SB 1028, which bans the practice of hunting animals over the Internet in California and prohibits the establishment of such a hunting range and Web site in the state.

Because of the bill, setting up rifles attached to video cameras near animal habitats in order to hunt is now against the law.

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December 23, 2005



Friday

EDITORIAL

Domestic violence victims need shield

It seems common sense that a woman who has been the victim of domestic violence should not face being imprisoned for contempt of court if she refuses to testify against her attacker. Someone who has been beaten and brutalized should not be forced to relive the pain in open court against her will. Yet under current law, these victims face the prospect of either recounting their stories — perhaps putting themselves in danger if the perpetrator is not convicted — or going to jail for refusing to testify.

Fortunately, Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Leland Yee, D-San Francisco/Daly City is working on a bill that would lift this burden.

Katina Britt, 32, of San Mateo barely escaped incarceration this week for being too afraid to testify at the trial of her ex-boyfriend, David Gilford. On Monday, Britt's court-appointed attorney obtained an emergency stay from the U.S. Court of Appeals, the very same day she was supposed to surrender for confinement in San Mateo County Jail.

Then on Tuesday, the jury convicted Gilford on charges of residential burglary, in addition to felony assault for severely beating Britt in 2003. He faces a seven-year sentence, but could have served 11 years if Britt had testified about their domestic relationship.

Understandably enough, district attorneys worry that without any coercive threat of jail, victims might be more likely to let their attackers intimidate them into refusing to talk, which could then allow dangerous batterers to escape confinement and remain free to injure or kill in the future.

But Yee believes that a preponderance of evidence, such as eyewitnesses, or photos and medical records of injuries, should usually be enough to convict a domestic-violence defendant for assault charges. After learning of Britt's predicament, Yee announced that he would introduce a bill in January to stop judges from jailing domestic violence victims who refuse to testify. A similar protection already exists for

victims of sexual abuse in California.

Yee's proposed bill is supported by Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse, San Mateo County's most active nonprofit aiding domestic violence sufferers. CORA Program Director Lisa de Geneste denounced current law as unfair because prosecutors can seek jail for victims reluctant to testify. She likened this to holding the victim personally responsible for winning a guilty verdict.

Under current law, victim statements to police cannot be presented as evidence and no officer or advocate can testify about such statements.

The victims of domestic violence have been through enough. Ideally, victims would provide strong evidence against the perpetrators of this cruel crime, but because physical abuse is often accompanied by psychological abuse, many victims may be frightened to testify. They shouldn't have to be afraid of going to jail if they don't.

